Numb. I.

THE

PATRICIAN.

THE

PATRICIAN.

To be continu'd Weekly.

No. I.

Being Conſiderations on the
PEERAGE.

In Anſwer to the PLEBEIAN.

—— That ſins againſt his Reaſon,
Calls ſawcy loud Sedition publick Zeal,
And Mutiny the Dictates of his Spirit. Otw. Orph.

By one who is neither a Knight, nor a Member of the Houſe of Commons.

The SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed for J. ROBERTS near the *Oxford Arms* in *Warwick-lane*, and A. DODD at the *Peacock* without *Temple-Bar*. 1719. Where Letters are taken in directed for the PATRICIAN. (Price Three Pence.)

16434.35

2363-30
1

HARVARD COLLEGE
JUL 6 1915
LIBRARY.

Taylor fund
(1-3)

NOV 17 1916

CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

PEERAGE.

Est Modus in Rebus; sunt certi denique Fines,
Quos ultra citraque nequit consistere Rectum. Hor.

I cannot be remember'd that there ever was a Government in *England*, which was so peculiarly happy as to please universally; Some Men are continually to be found who, carried along with the Torrent of Private Interest or Public Resentment, have ever made it their Business to oppose the Measures of the wisest Princes and ablest Statesmen; and what ill Effects this has often had on our excellent Constitution the History of former Times sufficiently evinces.

We now live in an Age, wherein it is esteemed meritorious to act contrary to, and with all our Might to oppose a Government that hath not been equal'd much less excell'd, by any preceding it, and nothing though in itself ever so advantageous, if propos'd by the Ministry, can meet with the least favourable Acceptance with the Subject, poisoned with treasonable Principles by the *Disaffected*, on one hand, and taught to cavil by the artful Insinuations of the *Disgusted*, on the other.

THE PLEBEIAN just publish'd (which occasion'd by the Weakness of the present Age, or the Artifice of the Printer, already appears with the *FOURTH EDITION* in the Frontispiece) has doubtless as much alarm'd the Friends to the Government, as the Presumption of its Author (to say no worse) has surpriz'd those who so wisely steer the Helm of it; and though it may be wrote in a Style as lofty, as the End proposed in publishing it is vile and low, I can not see that should be a convincing Reason, with Men of Sense, to allow the Arguments contain'd therein, at the Expence of his Majesty's Honour, and that of the *British* Nobility too.

I AGREE with the Author, that the Bill concerning Peerage is neither a Whig nor a Tory Point; but, however, a Matter of the last Consequence to the Safety and Welfare of the Constitution. We are certain, that parting with any Branch of the Subjects Privileges is very highly prejudicial to the State in General; but I defy the World to produce one single Instance of Evil accruing to the State from the Prince's giving up a Prerogative, which, if not bounded, or in the Hands of any but his Majesty, 'tis to be fear'd would not only prove a sad Sore in the Side of the Body Politic, but, in Process of Time, the Subversion

of

of our antient Conſtitution, and the Deprivation of the moſt valuable Privileges, Civil and Sacred. The firſt and greateſt Advantage ariſing from this Bill is, " That it will be a Bar upon the Crown, and prevent " the Prince on the Throne from increaſing the Number " of Lords, as the late Queen did to anſwer a preſent " Purpoſe : " And whatever the PLEBEIAN may think, I believe reaſonable Men, who judge of Things as they reſpect the public Service, and not their own narrow and ſiniſter Ends, will readily allow this to be a ſtrong Argument for the paſſing a Bill of this Kind. Was it ſo trifling a Matter to add a Dozen Peers to procure an inglorious Peace, which ſordidly gave up the unparalell'd Succeſſes of Ten Campaigns, and which, if not remedied by his Majeſty's Care and the Aſſiſtance of his faithful Counſellours, would have enſlav'd us and our Poſterity, that it is ſo ſoon forgot? Was the giving up our Trade and Commerce, and the brave and generous *Catalans* too, into the Hands of their Enemies, and this by increaſing the Number of Lords, ſo trivial an Affair that it has ſlipt our Memory? Surely No. Was the Deſerting our powerful and faithful Allies, and what was yet worſe, conſenting to Meaſures dangerous to that Succeſſion, (which, Thanks to God, now happily takes place) and that by an Addition of Twelve Peers, a Crime of ſo ſmall a Dye, that an Engliſhman can not only withhold his Reſentment, but entirely forget theſe Things? Certainly we are ſtill the ſame Men; and the Injuries done us were too notorious to be thought upon only when a Turn was to be ſerv'd. If the moſt neceſſary and fundamental Laws in Being, nay the moſt extraordinary Bleſſings of Liberty, are at beſt but precarious, as all muſt own, when, by the Addition of a Dozen Peers, every thing requeſted or propos'd by the Crown ſhall be granted,

it

it is a ſure Argument that this Bill is the ſtrongeſt Barrier for the Liberties of the People, and an uncommon Inſtance of his Majeſty's gracious Intentions of tranſmitting ſecure to Poſterity the Privileges we enjoy beyond any other Nations. That the Lords ſhould by this Means become too powerful both for the Crown and the Commons is contrary to Reaſon, ſince the Limitation of their Number is in ſome degree a Limitation of their Power, that, chiefly conſiſting in Numbers: Beſides, the Lords are but a third Part of the Legiſlative Power; and it is very inconſiſtent with ſound Senſe, that a third Part, eſpecially when limited, ſhould out-ballance the other two.

THE other Reaſon for paſſing this Bill, and a very ſubſtantial One too, is, "That it will be a Means to "keep Property or Great Eſtates in the Houſe of Com- "mons, from whence they are generally drawn out into "the Houſe of Peers." This is obvious to every one; and as it weakens the Number of wealthy Commoners, who are able to oppoſe that Power in the Lords which ſo much terrifies the PLEBEIAN, ſo it is of dangerous Conſequence to the Commons themſelves, who may otherwiſe on any extraordinary Emergency depend on ſuch Members, eſpecially if their Inclinations for the Preſervation of Liberty be as ſtrong as their Purſes are weighty: So that in Effect, if this Bill paſs, which God grant, it will be as Beneficial to them, as it will render the Lords Honourable and truly Great. The Commons ſure have no reaſon to be jealous of their Power and Privileges, ſince all the Properties they diſtinctly enjoy from the Lords remain as before. The Limitting the Houſe of Peers does not veſt them with an Authority or Power to impoſe Taxes, or, in Conſequence of that, to accord Subſidies to the King: No; the Commons will ſtill on the antient Foot be poſſeſs'd

of

of their peculiar Prerogatives with this advantageous Addition, That they will be for the future under no juſt Apprehenſion of being out-ballanc'd by the Lords. The moſt material Objection againſt this Bill in my Opinion is, That the *Pacta Conventa* of the Treaty of Union are by this Proceeding diſanull'd, and the Privileges of the *Scots* Peers infring'd. But are the Liberties of Three Nations of no more Concern, than the Privileges of the *Scots* Nobility? Are we to run the Riſque of the Loſs of them, to ſecure entire the Rights of the *Scots* Peers? Are the Houſe of Peers to be increas'd to a numberleſs Number, and to ſuffer the greateſt Diminution of their Honour, to gratify a few Perſons, who ſhall pretend their Rights and Privileges are endanger'd? We need not be at a Loſs to ſay any thing to the *Scots* Peerage: 'Tis the Parliament of *Great Britain*, and not of *England*, that finds a Neceſſity to paſs this Bill, without breaking the moſt ſolemn Contract between Two Nations; and Perſons are not depriv'd without Pretence of Forfeiture, ſince we have by ſad Experience found, and ſtill do find, that the Peſtilence of Diſaffection and Diſloyalty is ſeated as on its Throne in *Scotland*.

As to what regards the Clamours of thoſe, and among them the PLEBEIAN, as if the paſſing the depending Bill would ſhut the Door of the Houſe of Lords againſt virtuous Actions, and prove a Diſcouragement to Learning and Induſtry, it is ſufficient to ſay, That if Virtue, Learning and Induſtry, were to be rewarded with Peerage, the Houſe of Lords had been before now far more Numerous than that of the Commons. It is very natural to ſuppoſe that this Bill will not meet with any ſtrenuous Oppoſition among the Commons, if the exceeding Advantage of Limitting the Number of Peers, (and by that Proceeding of for

ever deſtroying the moſt exorbitant Prerogative of the Crown) be duly weigh'd and conſider'd. I own there will be ſome in that Houſe, who, puff'd up with either Pride or Vanity, and daringly pretending a great Share of Merit, will think it as neceſſary for their future Intereſt to oppoſe this Bill, as it will be grating to their inſatiable Ambition to ſuffer, by the Conſequences of ſuch an Act, an Excluſion from that Dignity, which nothing but the moſt unſufferable Ignorance could give them the leaſt Title of pretending to. But on the other Hand, I am as well ſatisfy'd there will be a Number of worthy Patriots, who more regarding Liberty than the Notion of it, will, without *the Aſſurance in their Pockets of being Peers when the Bill paſſes*, or on the Extinction of Families, either urge the Neceſſity of it from the dreadful Conſequences of ſuch a Power, which we need take a View of no farther back than the laſt Reign.

THERE are among us a Set of Men who glory in the Name of *Reſigners*, *Diſguſted*, *&c.* and theſe will be very ready to oppoſe this future Act, not as a Thing that is either contrary to Equity, or dangerous to the Conſtitution, but as it reſpects themſelves, and will be deſtructive of the Honours they have the Proſpect of being loaded with in a future Reign. Theſe Men cannot reliſh any Thing that the preſent Miniſtry are concerned in, and ſhew a particular Diſtaſte to every Thing that is not the Product of their own fertile Genius. They think, act, and argue one Way when in Power, but unhappily forget themſelves when out. Nay ſo abandon'd are they, that the Intereſt of his Majeſty and their Native Country is no longer a Matter of Concern to them, than they are at pleaſure diſpoſing of the Revenues of both, to aggrandize themſelves, and ſupply the

Neceſſities

Neceſſities of their ſlaviſh Dependants. 'Tis not long ſince a certain Member of this Clan, made no other Uſe of his Majeſty's Favours and the Public Revenues (unhappily for the Nation) he was entruſted with, than to work himſelf out of Debt; and now he daringly inſults the Majeſty of that Prince to whom all his Poſſeſſions are owing. Curſt be ſuch Men who fly in the Face of Majeſty, and endeavour the Subverſion of Government, nay, even the Ruin of their Country, when they are deſervedly removed from the Adminiſtration, and cannot rule and govern where they ſhould be ſubjected and obedient; may ſuch ſhare the Fate of Enemies to the Common Wealth, and bear the laſting and infamous Mark of Traytors to their Country, and that to their lateſt Poſterity.

THE Danger of the Lords having more Power by this Limitation than before, is as much imaginary, as their having already too much, is a mere Pretence; and the Inſinuation of the *Crown's never ſtanding in need of the Lords*, is of ſuch a Nature, that 'tis to be hop'd that auguſt Aſſembly will take Notice of the Offender, who ſeditiouſly vents his unguarded Rage, from the bad Proſpect of never having a Part in the Adminiſtration of Juſtice, nor the Honour to further the Intereſt of the Crown in that Houſe, as he on all Occaſions (if we gueſs at him right) oppoſes it where he is.

IT is very natural for Men who are fond of Change, to oppoſe every Thing that tends to ſettle the Conſtitution on an immoveable Baſis, and the Author of the PLEBEIAN being of this Number, there is no Room left for Surprize at his unaccountable Expreſſions, which reflect more Diſhonour to himſelf than they can poſſibly have Weight with judicious Men. In

ſhort,

ſhort, the Man that oppoſes this Bill, when it ſhall be propoſed among the Commons, deſerves much more to be branded with the infamous Name of Diſaffected to his Country, than thoſe very Men that voted the late Peace Laſting, Safe, and Honourable, for her late Majeſty and her Allies. The Nation's Intereſt, the Honour of the Houſe of Peers, and the Privileges of the Commons are ſo deeply concern'd in this Affair, that it is to be hop'd it will paſs both Houſes of Parliament, with the Approbation of thoſe who revere the Legiſlative Power, regard the Privileges of *Great Britain*, and thankfully admire the Condeſcenſion of a Prince, who can with Pleaſure part with ſo ſovereign a Prerogative for the Security of his Subjects Privileges.

In a Word, It is a Matter of as much Importance, and Neceſſity, for the Well-being of this Conſtitution, to limit the Number of Peers, as it is, for ever to exclude the Plebeian, and his Faction, from that Houſe.

FINIS.